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## Exploration and Discovery.

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DR. F. J. BLISS, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, was busy between March 19 and June 1 with excavations upon Tell ej-Judeideh, the third of the hills worked under the present firman, completing the work which was begun last autumn. There were no finds of unusual importance, but, as will be seen from some extracts from Dr. Bliss' report, on p. 320, the discoveries were numerous and interesting. On June 5 the excavating party removed to Tell Sandahannah, and commenced work there. Contrary to what was found on the three previous hills, the lowest stratum at Tell Sandahannah appears not to go back of the Jewish period.

AN unusual opportunity just now offers itself for archæological investigation in the Orient. The site of the biblical Ur of the Chaldees was identified in 1854 by the English consul, Mr. Taylor, and the mound which contains the remains of the city lies ready for excavation by any who will undertake it. It is believed that in the ruins will be found a large number of inscriptions and other remains of the earliest period of biblical history. The mound is just across the Euphrates river from Nasrieh, and is known in the Arabic of today as Mugheir. Its materials are being removed almost daily by the people of the city across the river, and the valuable records of antiquity which lie in it are likely at any time to be exhumed and appropriated. It is proposed by Dr. E. J. Banks, recent United States consul at Bagdad, that the Americans undertake to secure from the mound what it contains of value, and Dr. Banks has been made the treasurer of a committee of representative American scholars to carry on these excavations. It is estimated that the work will occupy two years, and that \$50,000 will be needed to cover the cost of it. The committee will, however, begin work as soon as \$12,000 has been secured, and thereafter trust to subsequent subscriptions to complete the undertaking. It is important that the remains at Mugheir should no longer be neglected, and it is to be hoped that interested persons will promptly subscribe the needed amount for the carrying out of the committee's plans.

SOME items of interest from Palestine may be brought together: The Jewish community at Jerusalem has purchased a piece of ground

west of the city, and has commenced building upon it a house for a library and museum for objects connected with the Holy Land.—A German post-office has been established in Jerusalem, two officials being transferred to that point from Berlin.—A steamboat, twenty-five meters long, has been constructed for use upon the Dead Sea for transportation of people and freight from the north to the south end, and to intervening points, as may be arranged later. The steamer was landed at Jaffa and taken on a truck to Jerusalem and Jericho. By this time it has been in all probability launched upon the sea.—It is reported that an order has been issued by the Sultan for a line of telegraph to be erected between Es Salt (beyond Jordan) and Mecca, and that the railway is to be continued from Mezairib to Akaba and Mecca. The work is to be done by soldiers.—Various conspicuous changes have been made in and about Jerusalem by the carrying off of ash heaps, and by the removal to points outside the city of dirt taken out in the reduction of hills within the walls. With regard to these topographical changes Dr. Schick, of Jerusalem, says: "When other generations have forgotten, or do not know, the origin of these [newly made] hills [outside the city], antiquarians will suppose that remains of some ancient buildings are hidden there, or perhaps some part of the fortifications. Reflecting on the changes of surface which have taken place in my lifetime, one learns to be cautious in judging of ancient Jerusalem from what one sees today, as so many topographers do. The ash heaps [north of the city] were formerly spoken of as the ashes from the altar sacrifices of the temple, whereas they were nothing more than unused stuff from soap works."

ONE of the most substantial biblical journals published is the *Zeitschrift* of the German Palestine Society, of which the twenty-second volume is now before us, edited by Dr. I. Benzinger, of Berlin. This double number of 104 pages is filled with scholarly productions from cover to cover. Naturally a reader will turn first to the biographical sketch of the late Professor Socin, for nearly ten years the occupant of what is historically the most famous Arabic professorship in Germany (that of Fleischer, of Leipzig), and one of the three founders of the Palestine Society itself. The sketch is from the pen of Socin's intimate friend and for many years his colleague in Basel and Tübingen, Professor Kautzsch, now of Halle. An excellent picture of Socin accompanies this sketch, which gives a most fascinating account of the travels and literary labors of him who was recognized as the leading Arabist of Germany, especially in the dialects. The years spent in

special research in the nooks and corners of the Orient in pursuit of oriental lore by the enthusiastic German scholar are graphically described by one who knew how to appreciate such researches. It is a pleasure to read that the full fruits of these researches are still to be printed. Socin was also the author of Baedeker's *Palestine and Syria*, and made this book indispensable, not only to the traveler, but also to the biblical scholar. Two posthumous articles by Socin follow, namely, a long list of Arabic geographical terms, with most valuable explanatory data, and a new study and reproduction of the Siloam inscription. The old question as to the biblical lily is again discussed by Dr. Christ, who reaches the conclusion that the materials are not at hand to decide exactly what flower is meant, but that it could not have been the white lily.

Two new societies have been organized in Germany that are entitled to the consideration of students of the Scriptures and of oriental literatures throughout the world. The older of these is the "Vorderasiatische Gesellschaft," the purpose of which is the interests of studies in the history, literature, and languages of the nations of Hither or western Asia on the basis of the monuments. It began in 1896 with the publication of *Mittheilungen* (Berlin: Peiser), consisting of original detail researches, each volume costing 15 marks to non-members (10 to members). Of the current volume (1899, No. 4) the first part has appeared, namely "Palmyrenisches," by J. Mordmann. The specialist cannot fail to be interested in these investigations, while the general reader will find his needs met in a series of pamphlets, begun this year, of which four are to be issued annually, at the low cost of 2 marks. This series (Leipzig: Hinrichs) bears the general title of "Der alte Orient," and the object is to present the latest and best results of special research in a manner readily understood by the non-specialist. Up to the present time two of these pamphlets have appeared, and these give rare promise for the series as such. The first is entitled *Die Völker Vorderasiens*, by Dr. Hugo Winckler, of the University of Berlin (pp. 36), and gives an excellent summary of what the recent researches have taught concerning the formation of the earliest and the biblical peoples of western Asia and east as far as Babylonia. It is hard to conceive how more solid and substantial results could be presented to the square inch than is done here. It is characteristic of the writer to make haste slowly in presenting results, as is seen by his cautious consideration of the Sumarian and the Hittite questions. The second pamphlet (pp. 30) is entitled *Die Amarna Zeit*, by Carl Niebuhr, and

gives a picture of the relation of Egypt and Hither Asia about 1400 B. C., on the basis of the famous El-Amarna tablets. Of the letters copious literally translated extracts are given. This brochure, too, is a *multum in parvo*, and both are good reading even for the specialist. The following numbers will contain: first, a discussion of the history, religion, and culture of the people of western Asia; secondly, the excavations of the English in Assyria and Babylonia, of the Americans in Nippur, and of the German Orient Committee in Sendshirli, Syria; thirdly, the archæological finds in southern Arabia. The pamphlets can also be bought separately at 60 pfennigs.

The other society, organized less than two years ago, is the "Orientgesellschaft" (not the Orient Committee that did work in Syria several years ago at the Hittite ruins). The new association was formed for the special purpose of enlisting the coöperation of educated Germany in general in the work of conducting excavations in the East, and the project has seemingly been successful. After a preliminary tour of examination made last year, under the direction of the experienced Dr. Koldewey, the society determined to lay bare the ruins of old Babylon, and has already been making its way into the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, the same in which Alexander the Great died. Dr. Koldewey has charge of the work, and the society expects to spend about \$25,000 a year on this enterprise, the emperor having himself generously contributed \$4,000. The new organization is not a rival of the old Oriental Society, the *Zeitschrift* of which is now being published in its fifty-third volume, but this latter will continue to be the chief medium for scientific research and literary investigation, while the new association will do active work in the field. Indeed, the latter was called into existence by members of the old society. The "Gesellschaft" has begun the publication of *Mittheilungen*, but these are naturally of a preliminary kind. Professor Friedrich Delitzsch, now of Berlin, has published a full account of the work of the new association in a pamphlet, *Ex Oriente Lux* (Leipzig: Hinrichs; 60 pfennigs), which was originally an address delivered by him in the presence of the emperor and the empress of Germany. The interest in the association and its work on the part, not only of the learned men, but also of the officials of Germany is quite general, and good results can be expected. The leading oriental scholars of the country are participating in the new enterprise.